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Although it feels far from over, this winter's snowfall thus far has taxed not only people's patience but has also demanded much from the equipment used for plowing snow, as well as from those who operate the crucial machinery that keeps the city plowed.

If you are a landscaper, then you need do something else during the snow season. Many landscapers will provide snow removal services to their existing customers. Offering a snow removal service can bring in much needed extra money during the slow landscaping season.

When starting a snow removal business your job duties will consist of removing snow from driveways, pathways, lots and sidewalks of homes or business locations. A disadvantage of starting a snow removal business is that it is a seasonal business in most parts of the country so you will not be working the whole year.

You should keep in mind that, one year, you may experience large amounts of snow while the next you may not experience any. You can go to your local library to research previous snowfall amounts in your local area to help give you an estimate on what to expect.

The first thing you need to make sure of if you are plowing snow is that you are fully equipped. There is nothing worse than being far away from your shop and not having something like a wrench, or a quart of hydraulic oil.

Take down the list of things you will need to do the job right. Trust me you will need all these things. Regarding the snow plow itself, the HD stands for Heavy Duty, DO NOT GET a home / residential use snow plow! It will not last and it won't be as well equipped as a commercial plow.

They are usually smaller, and won't be able to plow as much snow if it gets deep anyway.

Most in this business find themselves working at least 12 hours plowing parking lots, driveways just to keep them clear. Gas prices are on the average of $3.10 in most places and will probably only go up.

I heard a rumor that it might reach the 5 dollar mark by this summer… I am sure that will make it hard for the small guy who has to make a living plowing.

I am scared that if the people plowing start raising their prices due the gas price, they might lose these accounts. A big nation wide company like brinkman came in and I lost 2 accounts.

Salt and ice melt products are based upon market price availability.

Salt products are a commodity and, therefore, prices may increase or the product may not be available for application at all times. We reserve the right to raise all prices up to but not exceeding 5 percent for every dollar of fuel increases.

On the other hand, people are in this business to make money. If fuel goes up to $5 per gallon (let's say up another $1.70 per gal). How much fuel do you think you use @ each stop? How much is it costing you now and how much would it at $5? Then figure out if you really need to raise your prices, especially if you're afraid of losing your accounts.

Now, if everything also went up on you as well, then you have to work your numbers and see where you stand per stop. Last Wednesday, it was stated every state except Florida had snow so there are great business opportunities during the winter.

You will find that each snow removal customer will have different needs. Some will want their snow plowed only when it gets 4" deep or more and some will want it done at 1" or more. I have learnt to offer snow removal only for 1" or more, because 1 inch or less will usually melt off by

lunch time, and some people don't even want to pay you for doing it! Look at the job when there is no snow, so you will know where to go and on the larger or commercial jobs , ask them if they have a preference as to where you plow the snow. Look at how large the job is, as this will determine how much money you will charge them to plow it.

You must have both commercial and residential customers and offer at least two different ways of charging your customers, per time price, or a fixed per month price. This is important as commercials tend to like the fixed price per month. No matter how little or much it snows, it will be the same amount, and they can budget for it. It is also VERY necessary that you have some fixed price customers, as there can be some winter months where it does not snow, and you will need the fixed income.

Keep your residential customers as they are the bread and butter of your snow removal business , and are needed to grow your business through word of mouth. Invoice your customers once a month, or after each snow storm, as the work you just did will be fresh in their memories and they will be more likely to pay you sooner, and have fewer questions regarding your bill and how much you are charging them.

In Ohio the director of transportation shall adopt standards and specifications applicable to headlights, clearance lights, identification, and other lights, on snow removal equipment when operated on the highways, and on vehicles operating under special permits pursuant to section 4513.34 of the Revised Code, in lieu of the lights otherwise required on motor vehicles. Such standards and specifications may permit the use of flashing lights for purposes of identification on snow removal equipment, and oversize vehicles when in service upon the highways. The standards and specifications for lights referred to in this section shall correlate with and, so far as possible, conform with those approved by the American association of state highway officials.

It is unlawful to operate snow removal equipment on a highway unless the lights thereon comply with and are lighted when and as required by the standards and specifications adopted as provided in this section.